

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 2221

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR, MILI, CO
SUBJ: COLOMBIAN ARMED FORCES SUPPORT FOR ANTI-NARCOTICS
OPERATIONS

1. THE USMILGP COMMANDER MET WITH MINISTER OF DEFENSE (MOD)
GENERAL VARON VALENCIA ON MARCH 8 TO DISCUSS THE POSSIBLE USE
OF COLOMBIAN ARMED FORCES (CAF) IN ANTI-NARCOTICS OPERATIONS.
THE MEETING WAS ARRANGED AT THE REQUEST OF THE AMBASSADOR IN A
CONVERSATION WITH THE MOD.

2. THE MOD WAS CORDIAL AND RECEPTIVE, KNOWING IN ADVANCE THE
TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION. THE COMUSMILGP OUTLINED IN GENERAL TERMS
THE NEED FOR MILITARY PROFESSIONALS TO ASSIST THE ATTORNEY
GENERAL IN ARMED OPERATIONS AGAINST NARCOTICS VIOLATORS. THE
COMUSMILGP MADE SEVERAL SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING SPECIFIC CONTRI-
BUTIONS THE CAF COULD MAKE, THESE INCLUDED:

A. ORGANIZING AND TRAINING SPECIAL SECURITY FORCES OF ABOUT 25
MEN EACH WHO WOULD PROVIDE THE MILITARY FORCE NECESSARY TO
SEIZE AND SECURE OPERATIONAL AREAS, USING DEA HELICOPTERS. IT
WAS EMPHASIZED THAT SUCH FORCES WOULD REQUIRE SPECIAL TRAINING,
ARMS, EQUIPMENT, AND COMMUNICATIONS AS WELL AS SUPPORTING
AIRCRAFT AND RESERVE FORCES.

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B. PROVISION OF A TRAINING SITE FOR APPROXIMATELY SIX MONTHS TO
INCLUDE BARRACKS, FIRING RANGES, DINING FACILITIES AND CLASSROOMS
TO SUPPORT TRAINING OF NARCOTICS AGENTS. CAF WOULD ALSO HAVE TO
PROVIDE TRAINER PERSONNEL FOR WEAPONS TRAINING.

C. PROVISION OF MILITARY ARMS TO INCLUDE SMALL ARMS AND M-79
GRENADE LAUNCHERS.

D. THE POSSIBILITY OF USING COLOMBIAN AIR FORCE PILOTS TO FLY DEA HELICOPTERS.

E. THE NEED TO SURVEY ALL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES--TO INCLUDE CUSTOMS--TO DETERMINE IF THERE ARE ANY MARITIME SMALL CRAFT WHICH COULD BE USED IN SEARCH AND SEIZURE OPERATIONS WHICH WOULD INVOLVE THE USE OF CAF BOARDING PARTIES.

3. THE MOD WAS SUPPORTIVE OF THE PROPOSALS AND STATED THAT "CLEARLY, THESE WERE ACTIVITIES WHICH REQUIRED PROFESSIONAL MILITARY PERSONNEL AND ORGANIZATIONS AND SHOULD BE CONDUCTED BY THE CAF." HE WAS PROVIDED A SUMMARY SHEET OF THE DISCUSSION WHICH HE READ AND STATED THAT HE WOULD TURN OVER TO THE ARMED FORCES COMMANDER "FOR HIM AND HIS STAFF TO LOOK OVER," AND TO DISCUSS IN MORE DETAIL. COMUSMILGP SUGGESTED THE NEXT STEP SHOULD BE A COORDINATOR MEETING BETWEEN THE ARMED FORCES STAFF AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE. THE REPLY TO THIS WAS, "YES, YES. JUST AS SOON AS THE STAFF HAS LOOKED IT OVER."

4. THE COMUSMILGP REPORTS THAT WHILE THE MOD DID NOT DISCUSS ANY SPECIFIC PROPOSAL IN DETAIL, HE REACTED TO THE ISSUE OF CAF SUPPORT AS SOMETHING WHICH WAS AN OBVIOUS NECESSITY "OR YOU WILL LOSE THE HELICOPTERS" AND THAT IT WAS A CLEAR AND PROPER ROLE FOR THE CAF. WHILE THE ONLY COMMITMENT MADE WAS FOR THE MATTER TO BE STUDIED BY THE ARMED FORCES COMMANDER AND CONFIDENTIAL

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HIS STAFF, THE COMUSMILGP REPORTS HIS IMPRESSION OF THE MOD'S REACTION AS ONE OF COMPLETE SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSAL. ASECIO

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